

CLAIMS

1. A portable rack for assembling packages of building materials comprising:
 - a base having a proximal side, a distal side, a top, a bottom, and means for lifting the rack with the forks of a forklift; and
 - a plurality of elongated members attached to the proximal side and projecting upwardly from the base.
2. The rack of claim 1 wherein the elongated members have an operational height of between about 2 feet and about 6 feet, the distance between the proximal and distal sides is from about 3 feet to about 5 feet, and the proximal and distal sides have equal lengths of from about 10 feet to about 20 feet.
3. The rack of claim 1 wherein the base comprises a proximal beam, a distal beam parallel to the proximal beam, and a plurality of crossbars extending between the proximal and distal beams and being perpendicular thereto.
4. The rack of claim 3 wherein the plurality of crossbars project a selected distance beyond the distal beam.
5. The rack of claim 3 wherein the proximal and distal beams are I-beams, wherein each I-beam has two flanges separated by a web, and the plurality of crossbars are attached to the flanges of the proximal and distal beams.
6. The rack of claim 5 wherein the means for lifting the rack with the forks of a forklift comprise a pair of channels extending between the web of the proximal beam and the web of the distal beam.
7. The rack of claim 3 further comprising L-brackets attached to the proximal and distal beams and abutting the crossbars to create a channel through which straps can be fed.
8. The rack of claim 1 further comprising a rubber pad attached to the bottom of the base.

9. The rack of claim 1 wherein the plurality of elongated members attached to the proximal side of the base are two first elongated members, and the base further comprises:

a pair of crossbars, each having a first end on the proximal side of the base and a second end on the distal side of the base, and a proximal beam and a distal beam extending between the crossbars and attached to each crossbar between the first and second ends thereof;

a pair of second elongated members attached to and projecting upwardly from the second ends of the crossbars; and

a pair of support members connecting the second elongated members to the first elongated members, the first elongated members being attached to and projecting upwardly from the first ends of the crossbars, and the support members being positioned at a selected angle relative to the crossbars.

10. The rack of claim 1 wherein the elongated members are welded to the base.

11. The rack of claim 1 wherein the elongated members are attached to the base using fasteners.

12. The rack of claim 1 wherein the elongated members are spaced apart at a distance such that each item of building materials placed on the rack will abut at least two elongated members.

13. The rack of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of elongated members attached to the distal side of the base.

14. A portable rack for assembling packages of building materials, comprising:

a base having a proximal beam, a distal beam parallel to the proximal beam, a plurality of crossbars extending between the proximal and distal beams and being normal thereto, and a pair of channels extending between the proximal and distal beams for receiving forks of a forklift; and

a plurality of elongated members attached to the proximal beam and projecting upwardly from the base.

15. The rack of claim 14 wherein the elongated members have an operational height from about 2 feet to about 6 feet, the distance between the proximal and distal beams is from about 3 feet to about 4 feet, and the proximal and distal beams have equal lengths from about 10 feet to about 20 feet.
16. The rack of claim 14 wherein the proximal and distal beams are I-beams, each having two flanges separated by a web, and the plurality of crossbars are attached to the flanges of each of the proximal and distal beams.
17. The rack of claim 14 wherein the plurality of crossbars project a selected distance beyond the distal beam.
18. The rack of claim 14 further comprising L-brackets abutting the crossbars to create a channel through which straps can be fed.
19. The rack of claim 14 wherein the elongated members are spaced apart at a distance such that the building materials placed on the rack will abut at least two elongated members.
20. The rack of claim 14 further comprising a rubber pad attached to a bottom of the base.
21. The rack of claim 14 further comprising elongated members attached along the distal beam and projecting upwardly from the base.
22. The rack of claim 14 wherein the elongated members are attached to the base using welding.
23. The rack of claim 14 wherein the elongated members are attached to the base using fasteners.
24. A portable rack for assembling packages of building materials, comprising:

a base having a proximal side, a distal side, a top and a bottom, wherein the base comprises a pair of crossbars, each having a first end on the proximal side of the base and a second end on the distal side of the base, and a proximal beam and a distal beam extending between the crossbars and attached to each crossbar between the first and second ends thereof;

a pair of first posts attached to and projecting upwardly from the first ends of the crossbars;

a pair of second posts attached to and projecting upwardly from the second ends of the crossbars; and

a pair of support members connecting the second posts to the first posts, wherein the support members are positioned at a selected angle relative to the crossbars.

25. The rack of claim 24 wherein the elongated members have an operational height from about 2 feet to about 6 feet, the distance between the proximal and distal beams is from about 4 feet to about 5 feet, and the proximal and distal beams have equal lengths from about 8 feet to about 20 feet.
26. The rack of claim 24 wherein the base has a pair of channels attached to and extending between the proximal beam and the distal beam for receiving forks from a forklift.
27. The rack of claim 24 further comprising a rubber pad attached to the bottom of the base.
28. The rack of claim 24 wherein the spacing between first posts is chosen such that building materials placed on the rack will abut both first posts.
29. The rack of claim 24 wherein the second posts are shorter than the first posts, and the support members connect the ends of the second posts to a point on the first posts.

30. The rack of claim 24 wherein the second posts are approximately the same length as the first posts and the support members connect points on the second posts to points on the first posts.
31. The rack of claim 24 wherein the first and second posts are attached to the base by welding.
32. The rack of claim 24 wherein the first and second posts are attached to the base using fasteners.
33. The rack of claim 24 wherein the selected angle is between about 0 degrees and about 15 degrees.
34. A process for stacking and bundling building materials using a forklift having a pair of forks and a portable rack having a base and a plurality of elongated members attached to and projecting upwardly from a side thereof, the process comprising:
 - placing the building materials onto the base of the rack using the forklift;
 - moving the building materials toward the side of the base to which the elongated members are attached until the building materials abut at least one of the elongated members; and
 - pulling the forks out from under the building materials.
35. The process of claim 34 wherein the building materials are stacked on the rack in last-in-first-out (LIFO) order.
36. The process of claim 34 wherein placing the building materials onto the base of the rack comprises:
 - picking up the building materials using the forklift;

lifting the building materials higher than the height of the elongated members attached to the base of the rack;

positioning the building materials above the rack such that the forks of the forklift will straddle at least one elongated member extending upward from the base; and

lowering the building materials onto the base.

37. The process of claim 34 further comprising:

carrying the rack to the location where the building materials are stored using the forklift; and

carrying the rack away from the location where the building materials are stored using the forklift.

38. The process of claim 37 wherein carrying the rack comprises carrying the rack from the distal side of the base.
39. The process of claim 37 wherein carrying the rack comprises carrying the rack from the proximal side of the base.
40. The process of claim 34 further comprising strapping the building materials together while they are on the rack.
41. The process of claim 34 further comprising aligning the building materials on the rack through transverse shifting of the forklift forks.
42. The process of claim 34 further comprising transferring the building materials from the rack onto a truck.
43. The process of claim 34 further comprising pushing the building materials against the elongated members from the distal side of the rack.

44. The process of claim 34 wherein moving the building materials toward the side of the base to which the elongated members are attached comprises moving the materials toward a proximal side of the base.
45. The process of claim 34 wherein moving the building materials toward the side of the base to which the elongated members are attached comprises moving the materials toward a distal side of the base.